

THE 50+ Connection

NEWS and EVENTS from the
Howard County Office on Aging and Independence

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2020 Census Counts Every Generation

April 1 is Census Day!

Every 10 years, the United States counts everyone who lives in the country, from newborn babies to the oldest among us. It is important for everyone to complete the 2020 Census so that communities like Howard County can be accurately funded and represented.

According to AARP, older Americans have been more likely than other age groups to return their U.S. census forms and make sure they were counted. But experts say there may be challenges in getting older people to participate in the 2020 Census since it is the first to be completed largely online. A recent U.S. Census Bureau survey found that 56 percent of those 65 and older aren't comfortable with an online response and prefer to fill out a paper census form.

Postcards mailed to residents in mid-March have instructions on how to respond to the census online, by phone, or by mail. Choose the option that is most comfortable for you. Large-print guides to the questionnaire are also available upon request. From May to July, census takers will visit households that have not yet responded and can help you complete your form.

Census2020 results will influence community funding and congressional representation for Howard County over the next decade. This includes funding for programs and services that directly impact older adults, such as first responders; Medicare Part B; libraries and community centers; plus the Supportive Housing for the Elderly, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Senior Community Service Employment Program.

By law, your Census responses can only be used to produce statistics; this information cannot be shared with law enforcement agencies or used against you by any government agency or court in any way.

If you have questions or need assistance, contact us at 410-313-6325 (voice/relay), visit www.howardcountymd.gov/census2020, or email census2020@howardcountymd.gov.



Registration is now open for the 2020 season of Cycle2Health, Howard County's non-competitive, peer-led, bicycling club for adults of all ages and riding abilities, coordinated by the Office on Aging and Independence. For more information and to register, visit www.howardcountymd.gov/C2H.

A Message from Howard County Executive Calvin Ball



April may bring warmer weather and rain showers, but it's also a month that has long been associated with taxes. This month I'd like to highlight our tax credits available to older adults that support aging in place, tax preparation help at our 50+ centers, volunteer appreciation week, and how to complete the U.S. Census to ensure we receive critical federal funds.

Tax credits available to older adults include the Aging in Place Tax Credit, Senior Property Tax Credit, and the Livable Homes Property Tax Credit. These tax credits are designed to provide support for property owners to help the older adult population remain in their homes and continue to thrive in our community. Each tax credit has varying eligibility requirements and due dates. For detailed information and applications, please visit our newly-launched constituent portal at services.howardcountymd.gov or contact Maryland Access Point (MAP) with the Office on Aging and Independence for additional information.

If you need help preparing your taxes, AARP and the IRS are offering personal income tax preparation for Howard County residents through April 15, available to all middle- and low-income taxpayers, with emphasis on those age 60 and older. To schedule an appointment, call your local 50+ Center or 443-741-1220.

April 1 is National Census Day, if you haven't already completed your census questionnaire, be sure to take some time in the next month to complete it online, by phone, or by mail. The Census ensures that Howard County and our community receives the federal funds needed for our population — for hospitals, roads, support services under the federal Older Americans Act, and other vital programs. Please be sure to complete your census, so that all our residents are counted.

Last but not least, during National Volunteer Week (April 19-25), I hope you will join me to recognize and thank the many volunteers who lend their time, talent and voice to make a difference throughout Howard County. Doing good comes in many forms, and we recognize and celebrate them all!

 Howard County Office on
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24th Annual Women's Hall of Fame

Howard County Inducts Five New Members



Barbara Allen



Evelyn O. A. Darden



Lori A. Fuchs



Terri L. Hill



Tracey L. Williams

Howard County Executive Calvin Ball and the Commission for Women have inducted five local women into the 2020 Women's Hall of Fame. This class of inductees includes **Barbara Allen**, founder of James Place, Inc., and a tireless advocate for addiction-related policymaking and treatment; **Evelyn O. A. Darden**, a distinguished Maryland attorney and a staunch advocate for equal pay for women and civil rights; **Lori A. Fuchs**, a longtime community supporter of education, disability services, workforce development, and equity for women; **Terri L. Hill**, Maryland's 12th District delegate since 2015 and a groundbreaking physician and plastic surgeon; and **Tracey L. Williams**, a respected leader in K through 12 education and a catalyst in the creation of Howard County's inaugural expungement fair. "These five dynamic women have made meaningful impacts on our county, and it is quite fitting for them to be honored by the Commission for Women in the Hall of Fame," said County Executive Ball. "Our communities are more empowered because of their dedicated service to others and I am grateful for their contributions to Howard County."

Quilters Spread Goodwill One Stitch at a Time

April is Volunteer Appreciation Month



The Faithful Circle Quilter's group is just one example of how doing something you love can benefit others.

During April, the Department of Community Resources and Services (DCRS) will highlight the contributions volunteers make every day to support the work of our offices, boards and commissions. The Faithful Circle Quilters is one such group.

The group makes and donates hand-stitched items for six local charities, including Project Holiday and the Loan Closet through the Office on Aging and Independence. "We share friendship and camaraderie as we work on the quilts together," said organizer Sue Scott. "Knowing that the quilts will brighten someone's day makes it even better."

"Often times the smallest acts of volunteering have the biggest impact," says Darlene Vaselaros, DCRS volunteer coordinator. "Today and every day, we say 'thank you' to our amazing volunteers!" Visit www.hocovolunteer.org for other volunteer opportunities.

